



Plane Talk



January 2004

167th Airlift Wing, WVANG

Next UTAs 7-8 February

Change of Command Ceremony to be Held at 167th

Cols. Vollmecke, Gain Set to Replace Col. Thomas in Lead Roles on Base

Brig. Gen. V. Wayne Lloyd, commander of the West Virginia Air National Guard, announced the selection of Col. Eric Vollmecke to replace Col. Jesse Thomas as new commander of the 167th Airlift Wing. Col. William R. Gain, former unit vice commander, was subsequently named as air commander, a post also formerly held by Col. Thomas.

Col. Thomas is stepping down for health reasons after leading the unit in both roles since April 1999. Both Cols. Vollmecke and Gain will officially take their new positions at a ceremony to be held on base Sunday, Jan. 11.

Col. Vollmecke will run the base as a traditional guardsman, while Col. Gain will be responsible for overseeing the full-time technicians and the day-to-operations of the base. This is the first such command arrangement at the 167th in about 30 years.

Colonel Vollmecke Selected as Wing Commander

Col. Eric Vollmecke is set to replace Col. Jesse Thomas as the new commander of the 167th Airlift Wing at a ceremony to be held on base Jan. 11.

Col. Vollmecke attended The Citadel on an Air Force ROTC scholarship, earning a Bachelor's degree in mathematics and receiving a commission as a second lieutenant in 1982. He attended U.S. Air Force technical training at Keesler AFB, became a Communications Officer and was assigned to the 7th Communications Group at the Pentagon. He served as the action officer to modernize the communications systems at the National Military Command Center and worked directly with the Secretary of Defense. During this time he also earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration while attending George Washington University.

In 1987, Colonel Vollmecke joined the West Virginia Air National Guard and was selected to attend pilot training. While assigned to the 167th, he gained extensive worldwide airlift experience in a variety of missions from humanitarian relief to combat support during Operations in Southwest Asia, Bosnia and Kosovo. He was selected in 1992 by the Air National Guard as one of two officers for the Reserve Officer Exchange Program with the Royal Air Force (UK), where he flew operational missions into Africa. He was selected for various leadership positions within the Airlift Squadron and ultimately appointed Squadron Commander in 1999. After Sept. 11, 2001, he led the 167th on two separate deployments

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Col. Eric Vollmecke

Colonel Gain Selected as Air Commander

Col. William R. Gain, vice commander of the 167th Wing since October 2000, will officially become unit air commander at a ceremony to be held on base Jan. 11.

Col. Gain is a Master Navigator with more than 5,000 flying hours. He began his military career in 1969 by enlisting in the West Virginia Air National Guard as an Aeromedical Evacuation Specialist working in the C-121 Constellation. Three years later he received a direct commission as an officer and attended Undergraduate Navigator Training at Mather Air Force Base, Ca. He worked in the C-121, the T-29 Convair and various models of the C-130 Hercules.

As a traditional Guardsman, Col. Gain advanced to a Navigator Instructor/Evaluator position and was the chief of the unit's Exercise Evaluation Team. He was employed as a Program Director for

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Col. William Gain

Commander's View

With almost 33 years of military service, all I can say is thanks for everything. The Wing's performance over the past five years, during both peacetime and wartime operations, has been nothing less than superb. Please give the new commanders the same support, and thank you once again for your service to our country.



Worth Repeating

"Daring ideas are like chessmen moved forward. They may be beaten, but they may start a winning game."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

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Col. Jesse A. Thomas
2Lt. Andrew Schmidt

Master Sgt. Ronald K. Newcomer
Senior Amn. Steven E. Rau

Commander
PAO

PA Specialist
Admin

CHAPLET NEWS

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Dennis Yocum

The biggest news story of the week was the rehiring of Joe Gibbs to coach the Washington Redskins football team. In the "Washington Post" it was the front-page lead story on both Thursday and Friday. On both days the Gibbs story was the only story reported on the front page of the sports section plus four other full pages of sports news. It got more newspaper coverage than a presidential inauguration!

Why such interest? Well anything associated with the Redskins is big news in this area, and Joe had a great run in the '80s and '90s as head coach. He does know something about football and how to manage and motivate people. Over his eleven years the team went to the playoffs eight times, the Super Bowl four times and won the Big One three times. No coach has done better in so short a time. Joe Gibbs is a winner.

But there is something else about him that fascinates the public. He is not a "hunk" as my daughter would say. He is just an average looking guy. Nor is he a great speaker or fancy with words. What Gibbs has is consistent character. His years in the spotlight show an honest, hard working, down-to-earth guy. He's the kind of fellow you might like to have as a friend or next-door neighbor. What you see is what you get with him year after year.

Gibbs lives out values that most people find exemplary. He cares about family — his wife, Pat, of nearly 40 years, his children and grand children. Religious faith is an important, central part of Joe's life, and he doesn't hide it under a bushel. Joe doesn't back away from a challenge, so at age 63 he will risk his coaching reputation to try to turn a team of under-achievers into winners. In an age of narcissistic, materialistic athletes, Gibbs's life doesn't seem to focus on himself but on God, family and bringing out the best in his coaches and players. He has risen to the top of the coaching world without having to stomp on those around him. Since retiring from football he has risen to the top in NASCAR racing with the same character traits.

Joe demonstrates that nice guys who live out commendable values can finish first. I'll be rooting for him to perform some of his magic next fall. But even if Gibbs has lost the winning touch, he will still be a winner.



Air National Guard
Americans At Their Best.

“Col. Vollmecke from page 1.”

in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, first based in Germany, then later in Qatar.

In late 2002, Colonel Vollmecke was selected to become the State Director of Operations and assigned to Headquarters, WVANG. During Operation Iraqi Freedom he worked as the Chief of Staff for the Commander of WVANG, Brig. Gen. V. Wayne “Speedy” Lloyd, who served as the Director of Mobility Forces for US Central Command. He has been actively involved with the developing the Air Force requirements for the Joint National Training Capability, which is an Office of Defense initiative to conduct more realistic training.

In his civilian career, Col. Vollmecke joined Lockheed Martin in 1990 as a senior systems engineer to work in the development of complex communications systems. He is presently developing a nationally recognized program, the Critical Incident Response Toolset system, which allows first responders to quickly and effectively map critical infrastructures using wearable computers to provide better situational awareness after an incident or attack.

Col. Vollmecke is a command pilot with more than 3,500 flying hours and has flown 137 combat sorties. He led the 167th to a second place finish in the airdrop competition during an International Airlift Rodeo event in 1998. He is a former member of the Pentagon’s Triathlon team and is currently a competitive cyclist. In 1989, he participated in the first Himalayan Expedition to reach the summit of Mount Chulo in Nepal. He and his wife and five children reside in Great Falls, Va.



“Col. Gain from page 1.”

the Regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency for the State Department of Health. He managed the comprehensive EMS program for eight counties in Eastern W.Va., functioning as a liaison between the state health department and the local rescue squads, hospitals, fire departments and governmental agencies.

He began serving as a full-time Air National Guard technician in 1990, serving as a squadron navigator, navigator instructor/evaluator, squadron operations officer, exercise evaluation team chief, operations security team chief, on-scene commander, inspector general investigating officer, airspace manager, chief of safety, and finally vice commander.

A lifelong resident of Berkeley County, WV, he is married and has two children.

167th AW Promotions



TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL
Kevin G. Richardson ***OSF***



TO SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT
James T. Geraghty ***LRS***



TO MASTER SERGEANT
Todd R. Ingram ***MXS***
Todd R. Lewis ***MXG***



TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT
Ropbert A. Cody ***MSG***
Michael Kovacich ***AMXS***
Kenneth L. Lafollette, Jr. ***AS***
Travis J. Myers ***APS***
William G. Neiser ***APS***



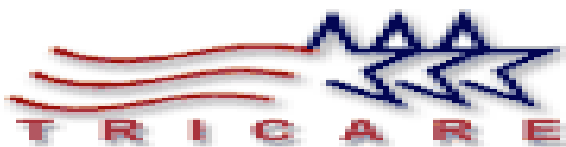
TO STAFF SERGEANT
Richard L. Fiorvanti ***MSF***
Joey L. Keyes ***AS***
Kevin A. Myers ***MXS***
Kris D. Rata ***LRS***



TO SENIOR AIRMAN
Ryan E. Day ***AS***
Shaun R. Leatherman ***MXS***
Laura M. Moseley ***MXS***
Matthew L. Wilson ***SFS***

Welcome to the 167th Airlift Wing

Daniel C. Allen	MXS
James P. Cline	CES
Noah T. Flick	AS
Joseph W. Harper	MDG
Jon Charles I. Harrison	MSG
Dusty T. Kendall	MXS
Bradley M. Lineburg	AES
Gary W. Mellott, Jr.	MXS
Jeremiah E. Nelson	AMXS
Robert C. Socks	OSF



TRICARE Offers Choices for Maternity, Family Health Care

Naval News Service reports that a military family whose first prenatal visit occurs on or after Dec. 28 will have more health care choices with TRICARE.

Recent changes in TRICARE regulations allow beneficiaries with TRICARE Standard to choose a civilian provider for maternity care, even if they live close to a military treatment facility (MTF).

Under the new law, a woman whose first prenatal visit occurs on or after Dec. 28 may choose a civilian doctor or midwife for prenatal care, and have her baby in a civilian hospital under TRICARE Standard. This benefit is available even if she lives near an MTF where maternity care is provided. TRICARE pays the expenses for prenatal care, labor and delivery, and post-natal care. However, there are co-payments involved. The amount varies based on length of stay in the hospital and the sponsor's status. In choosing civilian maternity care, a family must disenroll from TRICARE Prime and convert to TRICARE Standard. Switching to TRICARE Standard means not being able to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime for a period of one year unless the sponsor is in paygrade E-4 or below. During this time, patients needing medical attention, other than maternity care, will be subject to out-of-pocket expenses, such as deductibles and co-payments.

For more information, see http://www.news.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=11133. To learn more about TRICARE, see <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,30822—1,00.html>

Retiree Pharmacy Copay Increase Shelved

A budget proposal that would raise retiree cost shares considerably for the TRICARE pharmacy benefit, and would implement retiree copays for drugs obtained in military hospitals and clinics is being shelved. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) was pushing for the plan, but faced strong opposition from the Defense Department and other military groups. The Pentagon will now be studying the copay issue, and will make any recommendations on the budget proposal next year for the FY2006 budget. To learn about TRICARE benefits, see <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,30822—1,00.html>

New Clothing Management Procedures Being Instituted on Base

By Senior Master Sgt. Steven Davison

October 2003 started a new era in Clothing Management for the Air National Guard. The new method will remove clothing transactions from supply processing, eliminate base-level inventory and provide web support for the customer's needs. Uniform items included in this process are items identified in the initial issue authorization of dress blues, BDUs and also DCUs at a later date. These changes will not affect organizational (field jacket, flight suit, nomex gloves, etc.) clothing. Turnaround time, from ordering to delivery, is expected to be within ten days.

About 25 bases are testing these procedures with additional bases coming on line each month. By Oct. 1, 2004, all units will be utilizing these new procedures. Our actual start-up date for these procedures will be February 2004, just a month from now.

To you, the customer, this means all initial and replacement clothing will need to be ordered. Uniforms will come in with rank, USAF tape and name tape sewn on, with no charge to you. Guardsmen will place their order on UTA and pick up their clothing the next UTA.

Our inventory will be dropped except for enough clothing for fitting purposes. One disadvantage is, if you forget your hat, or belt, we will not be able to provide one for you that day. A small inventory of rank insignias will be maintained by the squadron 1st sergeants for promotion purposes.

I'm sure there will be "bugs" to be worked out but please be patient. Base supply will continue to do what we can to make this transaction as painless as possible.

On This Day In History

Jan. 18, 1905 — The Wright Brothers opened negotiations with the government for procurement of one airplane.

Jan. 24, 1946 — Gen. Carl Spaatz named the first chief of staff of the Army Air Forces.

Jan. 1, 1957 — Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, became the single site for Air Force basic training.

Jan. 9, 1976 — The 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, Langley Air Force Base, Va., received its first F-15 Eagle.

Jan. 17, 1991 — Strikes by U.S. and allied aircraft opened the air campaign portion of Operation Desert Storm in Iraq.



Que Pasa!

Maintenance Squadron – Maj. Robert Barrat and Tech. Sgt. Sam Rickabaugh

Winter weather is difficult for animals as well as humans, particularly when the daytime high temperature does not go above freezing. Take a few minutes each day to make sure all your pets have plenty of food and water in liquid form for the winter months. This also applies to livestock. Pets are not able to complain like their human counterparts.

Happenings in Maintenance: Congrats to Mike Darby from Avionics who scored a 94 percent on his 5-level CDC test. Todd Ingram and Todd Lewis were both promoted to Master Sergeant; Roy Edwards was promoted to Tech. Sergeant, and Adam Tourney, Kevin Myers and Dick Slonaker all were recently promoted to Staff Sergeant. Way to go!

In the travel department, more maintainers are leaving to SWA, continuing support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Best wishes.

Logistics Readiness Squadron – 2nd Lt. Chris Croson

We would like to congratulate and recognize the following individuals upon their being selected and awarded the Logistics Readiness Squadron's "Outstanding Airman of the Year" Award in their respective categories:

E-1 through E-5 Supply category is Senior Airman Nina Sprinkle, assigned to the Traffic Management Section; E6 through E-9 Supply category is Tech Sgt. Mathew Butts, assigned to the Combat Operations Section in CSSM.

In the Fuels category, the overall winner is Senior Airman Raymond Franze, selected for his outstanding Fuels support both at home station and while being deployed during 2003.

E-1 through E-5 Transportation category winner is Senior Airman Brad Runkles, assigned to Vehicle Operations; and in the E-6 through E-9 Transportation category is Tech. Sgt. Rodney Cesa who is assigned to Vehicle Maintenance.

These individuals displayed true professionalism and dedication within their work areas and were exemplary in performing outstanding logistical support to the 167th Airlift Wing's mission in 2003. We take this time to congratulate them on an excellent job in 2003!

We would like to also congratulate and welcome back members of our squadron who were recently deployed to SWA in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Supporting the mission there during the first rotation were Master Sgt.'s Robert Sadler, Marshall Timm and Chris Tusing. During the last rotation were Master Sgt. Greg Propst, Tech Sgt. Brian Faircloth and Staff Sgt. Misty Creek. These individuals performed in an exceptional manner under adverse conditions and logistically supported the multifaceted mission throughout the AOR. We salute them and congratulate them on an outstanding job and welcome them home.

LRS also welcomes back Airman 1st Class Andrew

Fream of Supply's Distribution Flight who recently returned from BMT and Supply Apprentice Technical School at Lackland AFB, Texas. He will now begin his military career at the 167th Airlift Wing, being assigned to the Distribution Flight's Mobility Asset Section.

Congratulations go out to Transportation's Senior Master Sgt. Jim Geraghty upon his recent promotion and being selected as the new NCOIC of Vehicle Maintenance. Replacing Jim, in his previous position, will be Tech. Sgt. Kerry Anderson, whom we also congratulate.

Other recent promotions in LRS were Staff Sgt. Timothy Merrill, Senior Airman Brandon Creason, Senior Airman David Grim and Senior Airman Kris Rata.

King Recognized for Outstanding Service in Finance

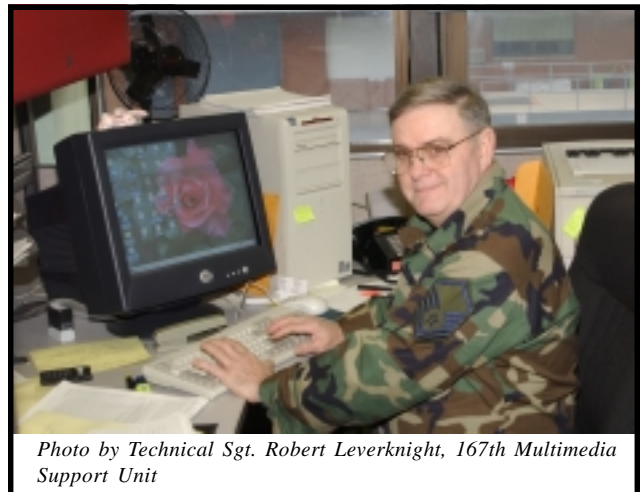


Photo by Technical Sgt. Robert Leverknight, 167th Multimedia Support Unit

Master Sgt. Walter "Bud" King was named the inaugural recipient of the 167th Financial Management Section's Comptroller Achievement Award. Sgt. King received the semi-annual award after a unanimous vote by his coworkers.

The award is based on excellence in criteria such as overall job knowledge, professional military experience, morale, pride, esprit de corps, written input from FM peers, dress and appearance, leadership abilities, self-improvement, mission contribution and attendance.

"I can think of no better role model for us to follow in finance than Bud King," said Senior Master Sgt. Preston P. Piper, Jr., Sgt. King's supervisor. "When you need something done, everyone knows you can count on Bud."

Sgt. King said that he has received many awards in his years with the 167th but that being selected by his coworkers made this one the most meaningful.

He has a long distinguished military career beginning with his enlistment during the Vietnam era, culminating in his retirement in March after 30 years of military service. "I'd like to thank everyone for their support and encouragement throughout the years," he said. "It was great working here. Only 52 days left."

Air Force Climate Survey Completed

More than half of all personnel within the U.S. Air Forces have responded to the 2003 Air Force Climate Survey, the results of which will be released Feb. 4. About 59 percent of people eligible within USAFE responded, according to

Capt. Amy Moore, USAFE Manpower Performance Management section chief at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The surveys were offered to all Air Force personnel, including, for the first time, reservists and civilian employees. 2003 survey included about 100 questions on subjects such as resources, core values, leadership, supervision, and training and development. They were filled out online and submitted through the Internet. The survey ran from Oct. 1 to Nov. 23 and was designed to measure a person's satisfaction with his or her job. For more information, see <http://www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=19412>

Guard, Reserve Get Full Time Commissary Benefits

All over America, Guard and Reserve personnel are burning their "little pink cards." The signing of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act signaled unlimited shopping privilege for Reserve component members and their families. It also signaled the end of issuing, tracking, and checking off those little pink Commissary Privilege Cards. Previously, Reserve component personnel and their families were allowed 24-commissary shopping days per calendar year; and they had to have their privilege cards initialed at the commissary each day they shopped. For more information, see http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/Reserve_DeCa_benefits.htm

Jacket, Pullover Require Nametags

The Air Force has established both the mandatory wear date and proper wear for the new metallic nametag on service dress uniforms and pullover sweaters.

Effective Jan. 1, the nametag must be worn on the wearer's right side of the service dress jacket with the bottom of the nametag level with the bottom of the ribbons, said Air Force Personnel Center officials here. It should be centered between the sleeve seam and the lapel.

If a duty badge is worn on the wearer's right side, men will center the badge a half-inch below the new nametag; women will center the badge a half-inch above the new

nametag. An exception is when a command insignia is worn by either men or women. It is worn either a half-inch above or below the nametag. Then, the duty badge is worn either a half-inch above or below the command insignia, depending on whether the airman is a current or former commander.

When the maternity jumper is worn as the maternity service dress, the nametag should be centered on the right side and placed even to, or 1 1/2 inches higher or lower than, the first exposed button.

The nametag will also be worn on pullover sweaters on the wearer's right side with the bottom of the nametag level centered between the middle of the sleeve seam and the seam of the neckline. It will not be worn on the cardigan sweater.

For more information, airmen can contact their military personnel flight or commanders support staff.

DCA Scholarships

Scholarship season started Nov 3 for those applying through the Defense Commissary Agency's increasingly popular program that awards \$1500 scholarships to children of military parents. Applications will be available online or at any commissary worldwide for the 2004 program. The deadline for submitting an application is Feb 18.

This year, the Fisher House Foundation, which administers the program, set up a Web site to answer questions, <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. Since the program began in 2001, nearly 1500 children of active and reserve personnel and military retirees have received scholarships totaling more than \$2.2 million.

Paper CLEP Tests Coming Online

The College Level Examination Program, a popular route for many service members seeking degrees, will introduce 14 new paper tests in April. The test material will be based on computer versions of CLEP exams being administered at national test centers located on college and university campuses.

CLEP tests offer service members a chance to earn up to 30 semester hours' credit toward a bachelor's degree. The exams, widely accepted by colleges and universities, cover material taught in most college freshman and sophomore courses.

For more information about CLEP tests and the nearest national test center, visit www.collegeboard.com/clep/ or go to www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/examinations/CLEP.htm.



AF Releasing New Fitness Instruction

by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez, Air Force Print News

One of the most noticeable changes to the Air Force's new fitness program is that it will be defined by an operational rather than a medical instruction.

The change shows that senior leaders consider fitness an important part of operational readiness, said Maj. Lisa Schmidt, the Air Force chief of health promotions operations.

"As we support the aerospace expeditionary force and the environments we now deploy to, fitness becomes a readiness issue," Schmidt said. "If a person is fit, they are going to be able to tolerate austere environments, the fatigue and the temperature changes."

The full text of the Air Force's new fitness instruction will be available to the force before Jan. 1, she said. The planned release comes less than five months after the service's highest ranking officer told airmen there would be changes in the way the Air Force looked at physical fitness.

"The amount of energy we devote to our fitness programs is not consistent with the growing demand of our warrior culture," wrote Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper in his July Sight Picture. "It's time to change that."

Besides making physical fitness a readiness requirement, the new instruction also puts an emphasis on commander involvement in unit fitness programs.

"If you look at the July Sight Picture, General Jumper says fitness is a commander's responsibility," Schmidt said. "This instruction puts more responsibility on the commander, not the medical community."

Among other things, the instruction requires unit and squadron commanders to implement and maintain a unit physical-training program and to offer the program at least three times a week.

The instruction also details methodology for conducting fitness evaluations. Schmidt said the instructions for conducting the push-up and crunch portions of the evaluation should be no surprise to airmen. They are the same instructions that have been used at the end of the cycle-ergometry test for the last two years.

"The only change is that the push-ups and crunches will be evaluated for one minute, instead of two minutes," Schmidt said.

The instruction also specifies how to conduct the aerobic portion of the test. Airmen will run on an outdoor course approved by the wing commander. During inclement weather, an indoor running track may be used. Treadmills will not be authorized for fitness evaluations.

The new fitness instruction takes effect Jan. 1, and will make obsolete the current fitness and weight-management instructions, Air Force Instruction 40-501 and AFI 40-502.

Concurrent receipt pay a reality

Military retirees will begin receiving both retired pay and Veterans Affairs disability compensation as the disability offset is phased out.

Previously, the offset reduced the amount of the military retiree's pay by an amount equal to any disability payment received from the VA.

Legislation authorizing concurrent receipt of both forms of compensation was signed by President Bush on Nov. 24. The legislation will deliver billions to more than 200,000 disabled military retirees and takes effect Jan. 1. Public Law 108-136 (Sections 641 and 642 of Public Law) authorizes a 10-year, phased elimination of the VA disability offset to retired pay. This will affect servicemembers with nondisability retirements, without regard to years of service.

Those who retired as a result of a service-related disability are also eligible. They must have at least 20 years of qualifying service. In all cases, the retiree must be rated at least 50-percent disabled by VA. Today, more than 200,000 military retirees meet the criteria required to receive an increase in their retired pay, said VA officials.

This legislation expands the field of eligibility for combat-related special compensation to include retirees with 20 years of qualifying service, who have a combined disability rating of less than 60 percent. It expands eligibility for a tax-exempt payment to replace retired pay lost to the concurrent receipt ban and is open to retirees with 20 or more years of service and disabilities tied to combat or combat-related training. Reserve retirees are included; however, people who retired under Temporary Early Retirement Authority are not.

Eligible retirees may not receive both concurrent receipt payments and combat-related special compensation at the same time. The act requires an annual "open season" to be conducted to allow veterans eligible for both concurrent payment and CRSC to choose between the two options. Details on how the annual open season will be conducted will be published separately.

Because the act also repeals the authorization for special compensation for the severely disabled which provides veterans benefits for those with disabilities greater than 60 percent, about 37,000 SCSD recipients will be the first to see increases to their retired pay effective Jan. 1 for the payment dated Feb. 2.

System changes are required to fully implement the legislation and will take several months to complete, said VA officials. People with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service are working closely with the VA to implement this legislation and issue the payments to all eligible retirees as soon as possible, said DFAS officials. When full implementation is completed, payments will include monies that are due retroactively to Jan. 1.

Interested military retirees should watch for updated information on the myPay and DFAS Web sites. Information on veterans' benefits is available at www.va.gov.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or Mad Cow Disease

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or “mad cow disease,” is a neurological wasting disease that has been found in cattle in many countries. BSE has a long incubation period, typically up to 8 or 10 years.

Methods of Infection

There are two known ways that BSE-infected cows may exist in the United States:

1. US cattle may have become infected by eating feed containing the remains of infected cattle or scrapie-infected sheep (this would have had to occur prior to the 1997 ban on feeding ruminant derived protein to other ruminants)
2. Importation – cattle imported from countries with BSE (the likely means of infection for the Washington State cow)

Origin of BSE

First reported in the United Kingdom (UK), BSE is closely related to a sheep disease called scrapie. Scientists believe the British outbreak started when cattle were given feed containing protein from scrapie-infected sheep. There is no evidence that BSE spreads horizontally, i.e., by contact between unrelated adult cattle or contact between cattle and other species.

Prion – the Infectious Agent

BSE, scrapie, and related diseases are passed on by an infectious protein particle called a prion. The prion causes neurologic symptoms, wasting, and death. The prion is not a living organism or a virus, but a protein that can be transmit-

ted in food. There is no cure or treatment for BSE, scrapie, vCJD, or related diseases.



Risk to Humans

The prion can rarely be transmitted to people who eat infected beef products. The BSE prion causes the degenerative and fatal neurologic disease known as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans. It has killed or sickened a cumulative total of 129 people worldwide — six in France, one each in Italy, Ireland, Canada and the United States, and the rest in the UK.

In cattle naturally infected with BSE, the agent has been found primarily in neurologic tissue, including brain, spinal cord, and some peripheral nerves. To date, there has been no evidence of infection detected in milk or muscle tissue. While not infectious person to person, the prion can be passed by blood transfusion or transplants. The United States currently bans blood donations from people who lived in Britain during the 1990s.

Despite recent rare BSE cases in cattle in Canada and elsewhere, the risk to human health in the United States is very low. Even in countries where BSE has been reported, the human health risk is extremely low. Since the onset of the BSE outbreak in the UK, only 119 vCJD cases occurred out of almost 60 million people exposed to beef from nearly 1 million infected animals.

For further information please contact LTC Shiela Kinty at Public Health ext 5107.



Retirements

Aerial Port Squadron
Technical Sgt. Andrew L. Tetreault Dec. 3

Airlift Squadron
Master Sgt. Daniel L. Casey Dec. 10

Medical Group
Maj. Richard L. Kee Dec. 10



New Law Protects Service Members

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — A new law replacing the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides service members greater protections to handle personal financial and legal obligations, officials said.

President Bush signed the Service Members' Civil Relief Act into law Dec. 19.

"The focus of the (new act) is the same as under the SSCRA: To provide protections to service members who have difficulty meeting their personal financial and legal obligations because of their military service," said Lt. Col. Patrick Lindemann, deputy director for legal policy in the office of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

This is significant, because it clarifies and updates SSCRA provisions and adds some protections.

"Service members on long-term deployments, or called to active duty, should not have to worry about their families in their absence being evicted from their quarters without sufficient legal protections, or that they are paying on a leased car or apartment that they can't use, or about civil legal proceedings they can't attend because of their deployment," he said.

"These are some of the situations the SCRA covers so that service members are able to devote their energies to the military mission and the defense needs of the nation, and not on civil matters waiting for them at home," he said.

An automatic 90-day stay of civil proceedings upon application by the service member is what Colonel Lindemann called "a significant change" in the new act. This applies to all judicial and administrative hearings. Previously, stays were discretionary with the courts.

The new relief act also makes it clear the 6-percent limitation on interest rates for pre-service debts requires a reduction in monthly payments, and any interest in excess of 6 percent is forgiven, not deferred, Colonel Lindemann said.

The SCRA also expanded the protection against eviction. Under the SSCRA, service members and their family who entered into a lease for \$1,200 or less could not be evicted without a court order. This amount is increased to \$2,400 and added an annual inflation adjustment. For 2004, the maximum will be \$2,465, significantly increasing the number of service members entitled to this protection, Colonel Lindemann said.

The new relief act also gives the service member who has received permanent change-of-station orders or who is being deployed for 90 days or more the right to terminate a housing lease with 30 days' written notice. Before, service members could be required to pay for housing they were unable to occupy.

One of the more significant new provisions is an added protection for motor-vehicle leases. Any active-duty service member who has received PCS orders outside the continental United States, or who is being deployed for 180 days or

more, may terminate a motor-vehicle lease. The law prohibits early termination charges.

"Now, service members won't have to pay monthly lease payments for a car they can't use," Colonel Lindemann said.

"Service members may not always realize all the protections they have under the law," Colonel Lindemann said. "If service members have questions about the SCRA or the protections that they may be entitled to, they should contact their unit judge advocate or installation legal assistance officer for further assistance."

Predatory Home Loans on the Rise

With lowered interest rates and increasing levels of equity in their homes, many cash-strapped homeowners are turning to home equity loans to fund that new purchase or clear debts. Although interest rates are low, there are many unscrupulous home equity brokers peddling their loans. Predatory loans are loans that are misleading in some fashion; often, the loan costs and repayment costs are excessive or unreasonably high. The Truth in Lending Act requires lenders to provide timely information about loan terms and costs. The law also gives consumers the right to cancel a home equity loan and certain other loans secured by a home up to three business days after signing the loan contract (known as the "right of rescission."). Preventive law programs should get this word out: If one is going to enter into a home equity loan, read the documents before signing. It could save one a great deal of money. And remember this: If someone pledges one's home as collateral for a loan and then can't repay, one could lose their home.

More info from FDIC: <http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnsum02/thefdic.html>



FEGLI Rates Rise For Some

Some Air Force people covered by Federal Employees Group Life Insurance will see an increase in premiums in January. Civilian employees in the Option B 70 to 80 or older age bands are slated for the increase the first full pay period of the new year.

Employees may cancel or decrease Option B coverage at any time, but should remember that opportunities to pick it up again are limited. To avoid paying the increased premium, elections should be submitted by Jan. 10 via the Employee Benefits Information System Web application at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS.htm, or the BEST automated phone system (800) 616-3775.



167th AIRLIFT WING STRATEGIC PLAN 2003



VISION

A WORLD CLASS AIRLIFT WING CAPITALIZING ON OUR STRENGTHS AS A MILITIA FORCE TO ACCOMPLISH ANY MISSION, ANY PLACE, ANY TIME

MISSION

MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST STATE OF READINESS FOR THOSE WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE

VALUES

+INTEGRITY +SERVICE +EXCELLENCE +PATRIOTISM

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- PURSUE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT NEW STRATEGIC AIRLIFT MISSION
- MEET ALL AEF AND HIGHER HEADQUARTERS TASKINGS
- IMPLEMENT PLAN FOR COMPLETION OF EORI BY DECEMBER 2004
- DEVELOP MENTORING PROGRAMS IN EACH SQUADRON
- STRIVE FOR AN END STRENGTH OF 100%
- STRIVE FOR ZERO SAFETY MISHAPS THROUGH SOUND RISK MANAGEMENT
- OUTSTANDING RATING ON THE UNIT COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
- CONTINUE TO ENHANCE FAMILY READINESS AWARENESS TO FAMILY MEMBERS

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